



THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog

Building a plane out of bananas, and other dumb ideas

LegaSea's *Rescue Fish* plan, released two weeks ago, is apparently the answer to 'restoring fish stocks and revitalising New Zealand's commercial fishing sector'.

The plan is so full of false assumptions and bewildering 'fixes', that debating it is like building a plane out of bananas and being encouraged to discuss why it can't fly.

But we will try. A good place to start is realising that LegaSea has built the plan around premises that are just plain wrong.

The Quota Management System (QMS) that they claim is broken is held up as one of the leading fisheries management schemes in the world. We don't say that, the world says that. The assertion that a few huge corporates own all the quota is also wrong – there are close to 1,300 quota holders, big and small, and they are all New Zealanders.

That this is a 'powerful lobby of commercial interests' that 'block initiatives to rebuild commercial fish stocks' also needs a little scientific examination. Of the 684 stocks in the QMS, 29 are assessed as overfished. All have rebuild plans in place. MPI is currently consulting on changes to catch limits, 22 of the 23 changes are to increase catch limits, hardly the sign of fisheries in decline.

Let's now look at the so-called solutions to those flawed assumptions.

LegaSea want the Crown to buy back all existing rights to fish at a fair value. NZIER who did the analysis around the banana plane, reckon that would cost \$1.7 billion. Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash said the cost to the Crown would be closer to \$5 billion. In a time of deepening recession.

There is also the small matter of the Crown's obligations under the Treaty settlement process and the trampling of Article 2, with no consultation. Well, good luck with that because in Maori fishing circles words like 'barbarous colonialisation' are already being thrown about in relation to the *Rescue Fish* plan. It would turn Maori from owners and users of the resource, who determine their own participation and destiny, into beneficiaries of the Crown who get the table scraps unwanted by LegaSea.

So, once the Crown buys all the quota, LegaSea proposes fixed term commercial permits be sold via a tender process. Only vessel owners will be allowed to tender, and a limit will be placed on how much fishing they can do. To participate in the commercial industry, you will also be prohibited from being both a fisher and a processor – you must choose one or the other. Why would you buy a vessel in the hope you might win a tender to fish? And why would you open a processing site if you had no idea whether you would have any fish to process?

This is a cynical piece of advocacy by LegaSea. It proposes to solve problems that do not exist and deny New Zealanders who do not fish the ability to access seafood.

It is a banana plane and it will not fly.



***FV San Aotea* prepares to taxi crew home**

FV San Aotea will soon set off on a 24-day voyage to collect 15 Kiwi crew who were targeting toothfish during the worldwide pandemic.

The crew went to sea four months ago, before lockdown, but the closure of international borders left them with few options to get home.

San Aotea has been loading up with essentials for the journey, so as not to run out of the basics – coffee, milk, bread and cheese, said skipper John Bennett.

The vessel will leave Timaru, travel east through the Southern Ocean, around Cape Horn and then meet with *FV San Aspiring* near the Falkland Islands; at which point the crew will swap vessels, returning the old crew back to New Zealand.

Conditions will be treacherous.

"[There are] icebergs, freezing conditions, and a little bit of daylight, mostly pretty cold," Bennett said.

With borders remaining closed due to Covid, retrieving the crew won't be a cheap exercise, said Sanford deepwater fleet manager Darryn Shaw.

"With all the isolation and disruption points on the way through this was the best option," he said.

"There's a few zeroes involved."

Bennett said they've been given good advice on precautionary measures despite there being surety there's no virus onboard.

"This takes the NZ bubble and the *Aspiring* bubble and brings the two together and keeps our people safe," Shaw said.

"Both boats are full of New Zealanders - doing it the Kiwi way."



Sanford's vessel, *San Aspiring*, fishes for ling domestically and targets toothfish in the Ross Sea and around the Islands of South Sandwich and South Georgia.

Collaboration a lifeline for Akaroa Salmon

Meal kit company Hello Fresh provided a lifeline to Akaroa Salmon when COVID-19 hit.

The Christchurch salmon farm produces over 200 tonnes of king salmon each year, selling its product domestically and to customers in the United States, Australia, Japan and South East Asia.

The company filled its first order of salmon for Hello Fresh in early March, but it wasn't long until the pandemic spread, and 80 percent of the company's customer base was forced to close.

"Hello Fresh was one of the few customers that continued to operate," said Akaroa Salmon managing director Duncan Bates.

Initially, the plan was to supply fish for the kits every six to eight weeks, but given the sales impact of COVID-19, the company requested Hello Fresh use more of its product in meals in return for a discount.

"Now we are supplying them once every two weeks which is just terrific. It's meaningful revenue when you haven't got a lot."

Akaroa's sales have dropped to a third of what they were pre-lockdown, but Hello Fresh is now its biggest customer, exceeding its existing restaurant and export sales.

"As well as buying thousands of units of our product with every order, they also display the Akaroa Salmon name on their packaging which gives us a significant lift in exposure," Bates said.

Bates also developed an online shop to manage and make sales to supermarkets during the crisis – revenue streams he said he'd always intended to develop.



Premium king salmon grown at the company's Christchurch farm. Image; Akaroa Salmon.

Seafood Stars Awards

The 2020 Seafood Stars Awards are now open for nominations.

Although the 2020 conference has been cancelled, the awards will continue, with winners announced through the Seafood magazine.

The awards are a great opportunity to celebrate our industry people and recognise their achievements.

This year's award categories include:

- Future Development and Innovation Award
- Young Achiever Award
- Longstanding Service Award
- COVID-19 Response Award

Download and submit [the form](#) to nominate someone today.

For more information, visit the [Seafood New Zealand website](#), or contact us at info@seafood.org.nz with any questions you may have.

Submissions close 30 June 2020.

News

The installation of cameras on all commercial fishing vessels has been delayed, pushing mandatory monitoring of the industry beyond the election, *Stuff* reported. The initial July 1 “holding date” for the regulation to be in place has now been changed to October 1, 2021. Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash said the camera technology, already installed on 20 boats in the West Coast, was not yet ready for wider distribution and it would be too costly for smaller fishing operators to afford. Nash said he remained eager to see cameras on boats, which is why the Government had installed cameras on the West Coast fishing boats as a trial. “The technology at this point is just not available to allow us to equip the whole fleet with cameras,” he said. “Also...most of these guys, they fish on someone else's quota, they don't make a terrible amount of money - asking them to put up \$10,000 or \$25,000 to have a camera on board, in my view at this stage is wrong. It's just not possible to do next month ... I've been very clear that I want to drive change for the fishing industry.”

The Provincial Growth Fund has provided a much-needed \$19.95 million injection into the Coromandel aquaculture industry. An extended raised wharf platform will be built to deal with rising sea levels in Coromandel Harbour and four new berths will be constructed for increased commercial mussel activity and a separate facility for launching recreational boats. “An extended wharf is a vital ingredient for the future growth of the industry but was beyond the resources of the local marine farmers. The government investment is a vote of confidence in our future,” said Stephen Hand, Chairman of the Coromandel Marine Farmers' Association. Mayor Sandra Goudie said the funding announcement is a significant investment in the district. The aquaculture industry currently contributes \$70 million to the district's GDP and 350 jobs. “Now, more than ever, we will be needing our food producers, particularly in the primary sector, to carry us forward in these uncertain times,” Sandra said. The new Sugarloaf wharf will accommodate up to 42,000 tonnes of mussels a year, where historically it has been constrained by lack of capacity. Approximately 90 percent of the North Island's Green Shell mussels are loaded over this wharf each year. Its construction, expected to take approximately 18 months to complete, will also generate approximately 25 new jobs. Long-term, expansion of the wharf is forecasted to create an additional 170 new jobs and a further 880 in supporting industries.

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